

A Lesson Well Learned

Like every good teacher, Teresa Briggs hopes her students learn important life skills in her class at Northwest Arkansas Community College Regional Technical Center.

With that goal in mind, Teresa – a lawyer and registered nurse – got her Red Cross instructor certification this past year so she could teach her students CPR. While teaching the unit for the first time this past fall, Teresa says she was tougher on the students than during the rest of the medical professions class.

“This is life and death,” she told them. She also drummed into them that “the only way they could hurt anyone was by doing nothing.” As a result of the class, the students were certified in CPR.

One of those students, 17-year-old Raenee Blevins of Fayetteville, had to put those lessons to the test a few weeks ago. Raenee was home alone with her mother in their living room. Suddenly, her mother called out to her. Raenee rushed to her side as her mother had a seizure – something that hadn’t happened in 12 years. When her mother stopped breathing, Raenee called 911 and was asked if she knew CPR. Overcoming her fear of hurting her mom, Raenee did CPR twice. Her mother started breathing the second time, and then the paramedics arrived.

When she went to class a few days later, Raenee nonchalantly told her teacher, “Hey, Miss B, I saved my mom’s life this weekend.” Teresa says it took a few minutes for the words to sink in; then the teacher started telling everyone, including Raenee’s classmates.

“It really has pointed out that what we’re doing here is important,” Teresa says. And, on a personal note, it showed that “what I do is important,” she adds.

The medical professions program at the regional technical center – one of 24 secondary area technical centers in the state – gives students classroom and clinical experiences in anatomy, physiology, and medical terminology. Students in the program can get certification as a nursing assistant and in CPR and first aid.



These days homework takes on a different meaning for Raenee Blevins, left, and her teacher, Teresa Briggs. Raenee used the CPR skills she learned from her teacher to save her mother’s life.